

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

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Report Illustrates Burden of Diabetes in Wyoming

A report recently released by the Wyoming Department of Health illustrates the growing burden of diabetes in Wyoming.

Diabetes results when the body cannot produce enough insulin to transport sugar from the blood to body cells, which results in high blood sugar. This high blood sugar, or glucose, affects other organs and systems in the body and results in severe and potentially life-threatening complications, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, lower-extremity amputations, neuropathy (impaired sensation of pain in the feet or hands), end-stage kidney disease and blindness.

More than 7 percent of Wyoming's adult population has been diagnosed with diabetes, which represents about 29,000 to 30,000 residents.

"The real news with these numbers is the prevalence of diabetes in Wyoming adults has been going up dramatically over the last several years," said Star Morrison, diabetes prevention and control manager with the Wyoming Department of Health. "It is a growing burden and concern for our state that should not be overlooked." The 1997 rate was 3 percent and so more than doubled to 7.4 percent by 2008.

Morrison noted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates one-third of people with diabetes have not yet been diagnosed. "This means Wyoming's actual rate of diabetes is likely over 10 percent of the adult population," she said.

"Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the state and is also a costly disease to treat," Morrison said. From July 2006 through June 2007, there were 615 Wyoming hospitalizations costing \$7.5 million with diabetes as the primary diagnosis.

Morrison noted the rate of diabetes increases with age. Wyoming adults under the age of 35 have a diagnosed rate of diabetes of less than 2 percent. This rate increases to 3.3 percent in adults aged 35-44 and then doubles to 6.6 percent in adults aged 45-54. Older adults in Wyoming have the highest rate of diabetes with those aged 55-64 having a 12 percent rate and those aged 65 and older having a rate of 17.2 percent. "If you adjust the rate to include those with diabetes who haven't yet been diagnosed, the rate for Wyoming adults aged 65 and over increases to more than one in five seniors," Morrison said.

"It's been estimated that the number of people aged 65 and over in Wyoming will increase by 113 percent over the next 10 years," Morrison said. "With increased age as a significant risk factor for diabetes, our aging population will most certainly increase the burden of diabetes in Wyoming."

Morrison said challenges in treating diabetes in Wyoming include the state's small population, distances some people have to travel to obtain healthcare and lack of diabetes-related specialists.

Washakie County has the highest rate of adult diabetes with 9.3 percent and Teton County has the lowest rate at 2.4 percent. Diabetes rates for Wyoming counties according to the Wyoming Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) (2003-07):

Albany	5.0%
Big Horn	7.4%
Campbell	5.0%
Carbon	6.8%
Converse	6.6%
Crook	5.4%
Fremont	8.3%
Goshen	7.6%
Hot Springs	7.1%
Johnson	5.4%
Laramie	7.5%
Lincoln	6.0%
Natrona	7.1%
Niobrara	5.6%
Park	6.2%
Platte	6.8%
Sheridan	7.6%
Sublette	4.8%
Sweetwater	5.0%
Teton	2.4%
Uinta	5.3%
Washakie	9.3%
Weston	6.2%

The Wyoming Department of Health's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program offers a website to help residents find reliable diabetes resources and information by county at <http://www.health.wyo.gov/phsd/diabetes>. The complete diabetes burden report can be downloaded from <http://www.health.wyo.gov/phsd/diabetes/surveillance.html>.

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